

The War of 1812: Frontier Conflict 78

In 1812 the United States declared war upon Britain, and fighting broke out on the Atlantic Ocean and along the border between the U.S. and Canada. As this map shows, most of the war was fought in Upper Canada. Detroit was captured by the British and their Indian allies, and American invasions of the Niagara Peninsula and Lower Canada were turned back. However, when "sea battles" were fought for control of the Great Lakes in 1813, the Americans won on Lake Erie.

Examine the boundary between Canada and the United States. How much of it was land, and how much was water? How does this help to explain where the battles were concentrated?

A few campaigns were fought away from the frontiers. When the Americans burned York (Toronto), the British retaliated by burning the American capital of Washington. A British attempt to capture New Orleans was stopped by the Americans.

In contrast to the European wars of this time, most of the battles fought in the War of 1812 were small. Distances between the armies were great, and communications were difficult. Battles were fought sporadically, and much of the fighting was done by tiny raiding parties venturing over borders to burn farms and towns.

With the signing of the Treaty of Ghent in 1814, the War of 1812 came to an end. The American attempt to make Canada a part of the United States had not succeeded. Many Canadians now felt a new sense of pride.

